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EXAMINER

DIXON, THOMAS A

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 09/544,508
Filing Date: April 06, 2000
Appellant(s): WYATT, PHIL

Brian M. Mattson
(Reg. No. 35,018)
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 22 October 2004.

(1) *Real Party in Interest*

A statement identifying the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) *Related Appeals and Interferences*

The brief does not contain a statement identifying the related appeals and interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the decision in the pending appeal is contained in the brief. Therefore, it is presumed that there are none. The Board, however, may exercise its discretion to require an explicit statement as to the existence of any related appeals and interferences.

(3) *Status of Claims*

The statement of the status of the claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) *Status of Amendments After Final*

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

(5) *Summary of Invention*

The summary of invention contained in the brief is correct.

(6) *Issues*

The appellant's statement of the issues in the brief is correct.

(7) *Grouping of Claims*

Appellant's brief includes a statement that independent claims 1 and 14, and dependent claims 2-10 and 15-19 do not stand or fall together and provides reasons as set forth in 37 CFR 1.192(c)(7) and (c)(8).

(8) *Claims Appealed*

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(9) Prior Art of Record

6,356,874	OHRN	4-2002
4,135,241	STANNIS et al	1-1979
6,289,088	BRUNO et al	9-2001

(10) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10-1. Claims 1-2, 4-9, 14-17, 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being anticipated by Ohrn (6,356,874) in view of Stanis et al ('4,135,241).

As per Claim 1, 14.

Ohrn ('874) discloses:

providing a network, see column 7, lines 60-66 and figure 1;

providing a database connected to the computer network, see figure 1;

inputting bed availability information for a plurality of healthcare facilities, wherein each of the plurality of healthcare facilities have beds for providing a plurality of types of medical care and further wherein the bed availability information is input into the database and is accessible by the computer network, see column 6, lines 6-45, column 7, lines 60-66 and column 10, lines 22-30;

providing a first access to the database for determining the available bed for the patient by a user of the database, see column 6, lines 6-45 and column 21, lines 29-34,

searching the bed availability information for the plurality of healthcare facilities in the database, see column 5, lines 37-63;

determining the available bed based on user preferences, see column 5 lines 37-63.

Art Unit: 3629

Ohrn ('874) does not specifically disclose entering individual medical condition of a patient and searching, matching the bed to the condition.

Stanis et al ('241) teaches searching for availability of beds, including reserving beds, and the information about the bed, including data regarding the nursing station to which it is associated, and matching, see column 3, lines 14-25 and column 21, lines 29-34 for the benefit of managing the status of beds in a hospital.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made to include matching patient conditions to available beds in the invention of Ohrn ('874) as taught by Stanis et al ('241) for the benefit of accurately placing patients in the correct ward.

As per Claim 2.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses providing the database on a network, see figure 1.

As per Claim 4.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses contacting one of the healthcare facilities after retrieving information about the healthcare facility, see column 10, lines 22-30 and column 5, lines 37-45.

As per Claim 5.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses providing a remote server storing the database, see figure 1.

As per Claim 6.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses providing a second access to the database wherein an extended care or a healthcare facility having beds enters the bed availability into the database via the second access, see column 7, lines 44-50 and column 10, lines 22-30.

As per Claim 7, 19.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses an individual healthcare facility accesses the database to input the bed availability information for the individual healthcare facility, see column 7, lines 44-50 and column 10, lines 22-30.

As per Claim 8, 15.

Ohrn ('874) does not specifically disclose bed availability includes a quantity of beds.

Stanis et al ('241) teaches a quantity of empty beds available, see column 7, line 43 – column 8, line 8 and column 3, lines 14-25 for the benefit of managing the status of beds in a hospital.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made to include a quantity of beds available in the invention of Ohrn ('874) as taught by Stanis et al ('241) for the benefit of managing the status of beds in a hospital.

Art Unit: 3629

As per Claim 9, 16.

Ohrn ('874) does not specifically disclose bed availability includes types of beds available.

Stanis et al ('241) teaches a types of beds, see column 7, line 43 – column 8, line 8 and column 3, lines 14-25 for the benefit of managing the status of beds in a hospital.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made to include a quantity of beds available in the invention of Ohrn ('874) as taught by Stanis et al ('241) for the benefit of managing the status of beds in a hospital.

As per Claim 17.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses the bed availability information includes a projection of expected availability of beds at a facility in a specified time frame, see column 5, lines 37-63.

10-2. Claims 3, 10, 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohrn (6,356,874) in view of Stanis et al ('241) further in view of Bruno et al (6,289,088).

As per Claim 3.

Ohrn ('874) does not specifically disclose the network is the internet.

Bruno et al ('088) teaches use of the internet as a less expensive alternative to long distance service, see column 5, lines 34-56.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made to use the internet as a less expensive alternate network as taught by Bruno et al ('088) in the invention of Ohrn ('874).

As per Claim 10.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses an online form for accessing the database and inputting information, see figure 3.

Ohrn ('874) does not specifically disclose the network is the internet.

Bruno et al ('088) teaches use of the internet as a less expensive alternative to long distance service, see column 5, lines 34-56.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made to use the internet as a less expensive alternate network as taught by Bruno et al ('088) in the invention of Ohrn ('874).

As per Claim 18.

Ohrn ('874) further discloses an online form for accessing the database and inputting information, see figure 3.

Ohrn ('874) does not specifically disclose the network is the internet.

Bruno et al ('088) teaches use of the internet as a less expensive alternative to long distance service, see column 5, lines 34-56.

Art Unit: 3629

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made to use the internet as a less expensive alternate network as taught by Bruno et al ('088) in the invention of Ohrn ('874).

(11) Response to Argument

11-1. Applicant's arguments that the Ohrn and Stannis et al references cannot be combined is not convincing. Applicant argues at the systems teach away from one another. Examiner disagrees, the technology of Stannis is seen to automate the hospital environment, though during an earlier, punch card era. Ohrn is a modern web interface into the back office aspects of a hospital. Webifying back office systems is well known for the integration of newer and older systems and would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

11-2 Applicant's argument that Stennis et al teaches only one health care provider rather than a plurality of providers is convincing. However, Ohrn is relied upon to teach the plurality of providers, see column 5, lines 37-41 (those hotels which have vacant rooms), Stennis et al is relied upon for the teaching of the healthcare provider with vacant rooms.

11-3 Applicant's argument that neither Ohrn nor Stennis et al teach a plurality of types of medical care is not convincing, Ohrn column 10, lines 27-30, discloses admissions to hospitals and operations, Stennis et al teaches different nursing stations, see column 7, lines 59-61 and searching for beds based on need for special attention or service, see column 21, lines 27-29. Further it is well known that hospitals have different wards, such as Maternity, Oncology, Cardiac Care etc, which provide different types of medical care to serve different types of patients with a need for special attention or service.

Art Unit: 3629

11-4. Applicant's arguments that Stanis et al reference does not disclose the claimed matching is not convincing, the matching feature is disclosed in column 21, lines 29-34, specifically line 27-28 discloses matching based on "nursing station and control characters indicating a need for special attention or service" which are seen to be applicant's claimed medical condition.

11-5 In response to applicant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971).

11-6 Claim 14 differs from Claim 1 in that it does not include the same level of detail as claim 1 regarding medical condition of the patient, but merely patient data, further it is an apparatus claim and therefore must be distinguished by structure.

11-7. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the

claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus the structural limitations of claim 14-19, including a network, a database, an input means, means for searching, comparing, matching and retrieving are disclosed in Ohrn in view of Stannis et al as described herein. Also as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

11-8. As per Claim 5, applicant's arguments regarding a remote database are not convincing. Ohrn teaches a central data processing device with a database, see figure 1 that is remote from the user terminal.

11-9. As per Claim 6, applicant's arguments regarding a second access to the database is not convincing, see column 7, lines 44-50 and column 10, lines 22-30, that the update is made automatically is seen to be a second access.

11-10. As per Claims 7, 19, applicant's arguments regarding access to input bed availability is not convincing, see column 7, lines 44-50 and column 10, lines 22-30, that the update is made automatically is seen to be input of bed availability.

11-11. As per Claims 8, 15, applicant's arguments regarding a empty bed available is not convincing, Ohrn discloses empty rooms, but not empty beds, but Stennis et al does, see column 7, line 43 – column 8, line 8 and column 3, lines 14-25 for the benefit of managing the status of beds in a hospital.

11-12. As per Claims 9, 16, applicant's arguments regarding types of beds is not convincing. Ohrn does not disclose types of beds, but Stennis et al does, see column 7, line 43 – column 8, line 8 and column 3, lines 14-25 for the benefit of managing the status of beds in a hospital.

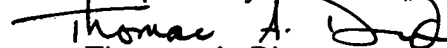
Art Unit: 3629

11-13. As per Claim 17, applicant's regarding a projection of expected availability is not convincing. Ohrn discloses expected availability in a specified time frame, see column 5, lines 37-63.

11-13. As per claims 3, 10, 18, applicant's arguments regarding the status of the internet and websites as being old and well known at the time of applicant's invention are not convincing. The internet was old and well known by the April 2000 filing date, regardless, Bruno discloses the internet, see column 5, lines 34-56.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,




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January 4, 2005

Conferees

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